



Procedure for Revocation of an Award

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1. Purpose

This procedure supports Atlantic Technological University (ATU) *AQAE067 Awards, Certification and Conferring Policy* which sets out the awards made by ATU and the parameters for the provision of certification for student learning and conferring of awards on students.

On rare occasions ATU may discover that the conferring of an award or credits was unjustified as it is subsequently established that the award was obtained through fraud, academic misconduct or administrative error. In such cases Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in its Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (December 2014) indicates that providers should have a procedure to guide the withdrawing or revoking the award.

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the circumstances whereby awards or credits conferred by ATU may be revoked, and the process for investigation, decision-making, and appeal.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all academic awards and credits granted by ATU and its antecedent institutes and colleges. It does not apply to honorary doctorate awards.

3. Reference Documents

QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (December 2014)

4. Procedure

4.1 Introduction

ATU may revoke an award or credits, and all privileges connected with the award, where it is proved to the satisfaction of the university, that the award was obtained through fraud, academic misconduct, or administrative error. This includes but is not limited to:

- any knowing and intentional misrepresentation of the facts leading to the making of award,
- obtaining entry to the university through misrepresentation,
- the award was obtained by deception or fraud including plagiarism, impersonation or contract cheating,

- the discovery, subsequent to the approval of the award, of serious academic or research misconduct,
- any infringement related to examination or assessment in work submitted for the award,
- identification of an administrative error or procedural irregularity in making the award under the University's assessment regulations,
- that the award holder has not met the requirements of the award conferred,
- serious irregularities in the conduct of an examination board,
- serious professional misconduct committed during the period of registration for the award,
- any circumstances that come to light after the award is made which, if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.

4.2 Notification and Initial Handling

- 4.2.1 Where a report or evidence comes to light indicating that there may be a case for revoking an award the matter will be passed to the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer, as Secretary of Academic Council, for further investigation.
- 4.2.2 Where the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer determines that the concern reported is vexatious, malicious or has insufficient substance to warrant substantive consideration, the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer may dismiss the concern at any time.
- 4.2.3 If in the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer's judgement there is a *prima facie* case to answer, they will arrange for the establishment of an Investigating Panel. The membership of the Investigating Panel will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the claim or allegation, but will normally be Chaired by a Chief Officer, and will include a minimum of two other members. It will not include any of the examiners involved in making the original recommendation for the award. In addition to the panel, an Assistant Registrar will act as Secretary, and will arrange for a written record of the proceedings.
- 4.2.4 Where the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer considers it appropriate given the circumstances of the case, the Investigating Panel membership may include an external academic or professional expert, normally in the relevant field.
- 4.2.5 The concern or claim relating to the validity of an award or credits will be formally notified in writing to the Dean of Faculty or the Chief Officer for Research as appropriate, once the Investigating Panel is established.

4.3 Investigation Panel

- 4.3.1 The Investigating Panel will undertake such inquiry as it considers relevant and appropriate in the circumstances to consider and determine the matter. It will determine its own operating procedures on a case-by-case basis, in the light of the particular circumstances of the case. Such procedures will minimally allow for:
- The award holder shall have an opportunity to respond to allegations (where relevant) and submit evidence. The award holder shall be given 10 working days to submit information, or they can request additional time and provide an explanation of the reason for the delay.
 - If it is decided to hold a meeting as part of the investigation, the award holder will be given the opportunity to answer allegations in person before the Investigating Panel and to put their case. Meetings of the Investigating Panel may be conducted wholly or partly in person and or in hybrid format by which all the members can be seen and hear and be heard at the same time.
 - The award holder may be accompanied at any meeting by a support person of their choice. Neither the award holder nor the University will normally be permitted to be represented in person by a legal practitioner at any hearing or meeting held under this procedure. Whether any such legal representation will be permitted will be at the reasonable discretion of the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer.
- 4.3.2 The Secretary to the investigating panel will take reasonable steps to provide the award holder with at least ten working days' written notice of the date, time and place of the meeting, the nature of the concern raised and the information in support of the concern, and details of the proposed schedule of proceedings to be adopted at the meeting. However, where such reasonable steps have been taken, the meeting may proceed in the award holder's absence.
- 4.3.3 If the award holder accepted the claim about their award before or during the meeting the Investigation Panel will focus on the appropriate action to be taken.
- 4.3.4 Under this procedure the balance of probabilities shall be the test applied in determining whether or not a concern is upheld.

4.4 Revocation of award and issuing of amended classification

- 4.4.1 The Investigating Panel may conclude that it is appropriate to
- recommend revocation of an award to Academic Council, or
 - no action be taken or
 - referral back to the Department for reconsideration by an Examination Board.

- 4.4.2 A referral to back to the examination board may consider an alteration in the award classification, or the award of an exit award. This will require discussion with the current External Examiner(s) for the programme concerned and the Head of Department and Examination Board (or in the event that the programme is no longer running, with External Examiners and the Examination Board for the closest cognate course). A response from the Examination Board should be returned within 10 working days (not withstanding periods of academic leave).
- 4.4.3 The written report of the Investigating Panel's deliberations, and its recommendations, with a summary of the evidence considered should be submitted to the next meeting of Academic Council for consideration.
- 4.4.4 Academic Council will make a determination, including a decision to revoke the award or credits if warranted. In reaching its decision Academic Council will consider, but need not be bound by, the recommendations submitted by the Investigating Panel.
- 4.4.5 A recommendation for revocation may be passed by Academic Council by a simple majority in favour of it.
- 4.4.6 In the event that Academic Council concludes that the award should be revoked, the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer will notify the award holder of the decision of Academic Council, in writing.
- 4.4.7 In the event that Academic Council concludes there is no case to answer, all records of the allegation and any subsequent investigation shall be destroyed and the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer shall confirm to the award holder that this has been done.
- 4.4.8 Where an award is revoked, the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer will write to the award holder to confirm that the award has been revoked, and the reasons for the decision, and will require that the hardcopy Parchment (or certificate) is returned to the University within 10 working days. The digital copy of the Parchment will be revoked by the Examination Office immediately. If the decision of Academic Council is that the award classification be altered, a revised parchment will be issued on return of the original. The new parchment will be dated the same as the original. The award holder shall also be advised of the consequences of continuing to use the award following revocation.
- 4.4.9 After the 10 days, or as soon as the parchment is returned, the award holder will be sent a letter confirming the process has completed and noting the return or otherwise of the parchment. The Academic Affairs Manager (Academic Systems, Planning and Reporting) will immediately amend the Student Records System as necessary.

4.5 Right of Appeal

- 4.5.1 The student has a right to appeal the decision. Any appeal must be received within 10 working days of notification of the revocation from the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer.

Appeals should be submitted in writing to the President of ATU, as Chair of Academic Council, who will appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who was not involved in the original investigation, to conduct a review. The reviewer will uphold the original decision or recommend a re-investigation on the basis of evidence of the following only:

- Procedural irregularities
- new evidence not previously available at the time of the investigating panel
- perceived bias or unfairness in the process

If the reviewer recommends a re-investigation this will be referred back to the Registrar and Chief Academic Officer.

- 4.5.2 The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the student and the decision of the reviewer is final cannot be appealed to any higher authority by any further process in the University. It is expected that reviews will be completed within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal.

4.6 Awards made through Collaborative Partnerships

- 4.6.1 If the award holder in question holds an award relating to a programme delivered under a collaborative agreement for which the University is the awarding body, the provisions within this policy will apply. Relevant staff at the partner institution (as appropriate to the case and to the nature of the partnership) must be involved in any investigation.
- 4.6.2 For awards where the University is not the awarding body the equivalent policy and procedures for the awarding body will normally apply.
- 4.6.3 Procedures for awards made jointly with other institutions will be detailed in the formal consortium agreement between the two institutions.

4.7 Onward reporting

- 4.7.1 Any decision by Academic Council to revoke an award must be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

4.7.2 The university will report the revocation to relevant external bodies professional associations or regulatory agencies as appropriate. Where there is believed to be a potential safeguarding risk the university should inform the employer or the statutory authorities.

4.8 Right to review by Ombudsman

If a student feels that they have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with the decision/ outcome, it is open to them to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of the administrative actions or procedures of the university, as well as delays or inactions in the students' dealings with the university. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use. The Ombudsman does not consider matters of academic judgment.

The Ombudsman will ask the student for details of the student complaint and a copy of the ATU appeal response. Contact the Ombudsman by:

Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie

Or writing to Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773

Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 639 5600 if the student has any queries or if the student needs help making the student complaint.

4.9 Confidentiality and record keeping

4.9.1 All proceedings will be conducted with strict confidentiality. Records of the investigation and decisions will be maintained securely in accordance with the university's data protection and record retention schedule.

4.9.2 Following the conclusion of an investigation the investigation panel members will securely destroy or delete all related communications and documentation containing confidential information including emails and notes.

5. Documents Related to this Procedure

AQAE067 Awards, Certification and Conferring Policy

6. Measurement of Effectiveness of this Procedure

Not Applicable.

7. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
000	New Procedure. Approved by Academic Standards and Policy Committee of Academic Council	18 May 2026